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Ex-Israel PM Naftali Bennett blames West for thwarting possibility of peace between Russia, Ukraine

Naftali Bennett said that his efforts as middleman between Russia and Ukraine was almost a success with both countries agreeing to make concessions and call for a truce

Umang Sharma | February 06, 2023 19:45:47 IST

Ex-Israel PM Naftali Bennett blames West for thwarting possibility of peace between Russia, Ukraine. AFP.

Jerusalem: Peace could have been a possibility between Russia and Ukraine shortly after the start of their conflict in February last year. However, latest reports shed light on the fact that Kyiv's Western backers blocked the negotiations between the two neighbours. The shocking statement has been made by former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, who mediated those contacts.

Naftali Bennett says West blocked truce between Russia, Ukraine

In an interview to Israel's *Channel 12*, Naftali Bennett said that his efforts as middleman between Moscow and Kyiv was almost a success with both countries agreeing to make concessions and call for a truce.

However, he added that it did not happen as Western backers to Ukraine stopped it from taking place.

"I think there was a legitimate decision by the West to keep striking [Russian President Vladimir] Putin... I mean the more aggressive approach," he said, adding, "Basically, yes. They blocked it," to a question if US and its allies 'blocked' the peace process between Moscow and Kyiv.

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Bennett, however, clarified, “I claim there was a good chance of reaching a ceasefire. But I’m not claiming it was the right thing.”

Bennett further revealed that his mediation was coordinated to the minutest detail with US, France and Germany. However, after conflict broke out, there was no unified approach on how to deal with it. “[British PM] Boris Johnson adopted the aggressive line; [German Chancellor Olaf] Scholz and [French President Emmanuel] Macron were more pragmatic, and [US President Joe] Biden was both,” he said.

Russia reacts

Russia’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova reacted to the revelations on Telegram stating that it was yet “another confession” that the West was not interested in peace in Ukraine, the report added.

Not going to kill Volodymyr Zelenskyy

One of the more shocking revelations from the interview is of Bennett claiming that among other things, he managed to secure a pledge from Putin that he was “not going to kill Zelenskyy” who feared for his life.

Bennett added that the Russian leader was also ready to retract his demand for the demilitarisation of Ukraine, while Zelenskyy promised to give up on his aspirations to join NATO.

Discussions about peace ended between Russia and Ukraine when on 1 April, 2022, Ukrainian authorities accused Russian military of killing civilians in Kyiv.

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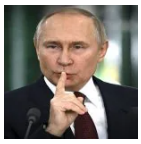

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